

# Executive Network

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June 14, 2022

# Heather Nesle, New York Life Foundation

[Heather Nesle](#) is president of the [New York Life Foundation](#), the charitable foundation created by New York Life Insurance Company. In addition to her Foundation duties, she is senior vice president of New York Life's Corporate Responsibility Department.

The New York Life Foundation devotes the majority of its funding each year to programs that help children in the areas of educational enhancement and childhood bereavement. Ms. Nesle manages the Foundation's latest initiative, [Brave of Heart Fund](#), which is designed to provide financial support in the form of charitable relief grants to assist the families of healthcare workers who lose their lives to COVID-19. New York Life Corporate Responsibility initiatives include ESG reporting and strategy, disaster relief, and the award-winning Volunteers for Good program, which helps New York Life employees and agents nationwide volunteer within their communities.

Ms. Nesle most recently served as vice president, corporate sustainability at HSBC Bank USA. Prior to that, she served in various roles at Fannie Mae, most recently as senior capital markets manager, as well as senior communications manager, and information architect.

Ms. Nesle was the recipient of the 2018 "Charlie Award" from Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose (CECP), which is given to a corporate affairs professional who demonstrates perseverance in the pursuit of societal advancement. She is a current David Rockefeller Fellow through the Partnership for New York City. Ms. Nesle serves on the Board of Directors of Monumental Women, Philanthropy New York, and the Afterschool Alliance. She has also served on the Board of Directors of the Western New York Public Broadcasting Association.

Ms. Nesle earned a Master of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications and human services from George Washington University. She currently resides in New York, NY with her husband, Steve, son, Benjamin, and daughter, Paige.

# Poll #1 - How are enterprise-wide commitments established at your company?

- CEO directs with no input/consultation of the CSR team
- CEO led with input/consultation of the CSR team
- CSR team leads on behalf of company
- My company does not participate in corporate commitments or signatory efforts
- Other – Share in Chat

# Poll #2 – What stakeholders have a voice in these initiatives?

- Government Affairs/Relations
- Legal
- Risk/Compliance
- Communications
- CSR
- Other – Share in Chat

# Facilitated Dialogue

- How can CSR professionals help influence these decisions before they are made?
- How can corporate social impact teams help guide, advise, and lead your company's CEO-driven business commitments after a decision has been made or signed?
- How do you determine the level of support given to these initiatives?
- What new topics/advocacy areas are opening up for your companies that you are having to consider?

# Key Discussion Themes

- CEO coalitions and corporate signatory initiatives are on the rise, and it is important to have a voice and participate in a shared value strategy to influence decisions.
- Continue to build the trust of peers and your network to help proactively learn of initiatives and/or the intent of peer companies to approach your CEO.
- Utilize formal or informal leadership roundtables, e.g., ESG committee or functional leaders group, to gain perspective and buy-in on whether and how to participate. Determine the best person to influence the CEO's thinking and work closely with them, e.g., Govt Affairs or Legal Counsel.
- Before signing on, determine whether the issue is authentic to the company's mission and CSR strategy but pick your battles. If it is aligned with the mission but not CSR strategy, consider a low-effort response if necessary. Consider a CEO-driven budget line set aside for unplanned commitments or asks.
- Issues on the rise include Roe v. Wade, gun/firearm policies, voting rights, and anti-ESG legislation. If your CSR champions an issue but your support for electeds is not aligned, know that it will be scrutinized by increasingly savvy stakeholders.
- Employee resource groups are a valuable resource for listening to and responding to employee voices. Engage with them on issues.

# Up Next



August 9, 2022



1:00-2:15 PM ET



2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every other month

